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ABSTRACT

This booklet is designed to provide middle and secondary school teachers with ideas on how to involve students in activities that allow them to explore the teaching profession. The ideas can be adapted to fit the particular needs of the teachers and students involved and can also be supplemented by students' and teachers' own ideas. Sections cover: (1) organizing future teacher activities and clubs; (2) club meetings (introductory meeting, organizational meeting, charter meeting, and subsequent meeting plans); (3) sample service activities (teacher and school oriented services and student community oriented services); (4) sample trips, social programs, and other activities; (5) sample fund-raising activities; (6) club publicity; and (7) community and college involvement. (CB)

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EXPLORING THE TEACHING PROFESSION IN NEW JERSEY

An Activities Handbook for Teachers and Future Teachers

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SP 029 447

Teaching .... It's a vital profession

New Jersey State Department of Education

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PREFACE

Teaching is a profession that is vital to the future of New Jersey and the nation. However, research and discussions with teachers, guidance counselors and students indicate that teaching is seldom presented in a positive manner to young adults as a career option. Students are encouraged by their parents, guidance counselors and others to explore many career paths before choosing one. Educators tell us, though, that teaching rarely is emphasized as a viable career choice -- even at school events such as career fairs.

Young people interested in teaching can best explore the profession by interacting with educators. Of course, students interact with educators daily, but their view of the profession may be two-dimensional: the teacher teaches; the student is taught. Students rarely see the other dimensions of a teacher's work -- the judgments made while grading English essays; the personal counseling provided students and parents; the planning involved in demonstrating a scientific concept to a physics class or in preparing any effective instructional session.

This booklet is designed to provide interested middle and secondary school teachers with ideas on how to involve students in activities that allow them to explore the teaching profession. These ideas can be adapted to fit the particular needs of the teachers and students involved; they also can be supplemented by students' and teachers' own ideas.

By sharing the vitality of teaching with bright, talented students, New Jersey teachers who serve as faculty advisors for Future Teacher Clubs or sponsor related activities can help ensure that their profession enters the 21st century with renewed vigor.

Saul Cooperman
Commissioner of Education
October 1987

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This handbook has been structured as a step-by-step guide to organizing Future Teacher Clubs. However, it should be emphasized that most of the programs and activities also can be conducted individually by teachers and students without the formal structure of a club.

ORGANIZING FUTURE TEACHER ACTIVITIES AND CLUBS

1. To organize a club, the faculty advisor should first obtain the necessary approval from the appropriate administrator in the school or district, such as the principal or local chief school administrator.

2. Once approved, the purpose of organizing the club and its possible services and activities can be shared with other teachers to stimulate their interest and support and to request their recommendation of prospective members. Teachers also can be asked to suggest to individual students that they join the club. Recruitment should include academically talented, creative students who might not specifically plan to become teachers. For example, bright students who plan to attend college but have not chosen a field of study may discover, through the Future Teacher Club, that teaching could offer a viable career opportunity for them.

3. Expand the membership drive by:

   * Writing articles or placing advertisements in the school newspaper and/or district newsletter;

   * Distributing invitations to students to attend a club meeting; and

   * Posting flyers/signs encouraging students to join on their own.

CLUB MEETINGS

Introductory Meeting

1. Before the meeting begins, solicit a volunteer to be temporary club secretary and take informal minutes.

2. Introductions -- Have students attending the meeting introduce themselves, telling the group something about themselves other than just their names (e.g. one or two outside interests, special talents, jobs or volunteer work, etc.). Pass around a sign-in sheet and request that each student provide information for a roster (name, address, telephone, etc.).

3. Explain the purpose of the club and ask students to think of and discuss ideas for:

   * Nomination and election procedures;
   * Club membership requirements;
   * Level of participation/commitment required of members;
   * Frequency, time and day of club meetings.

4. Share the contents of this handbook with the students. Discuss potential meeting programs, services and other activities of the club, including fund-raising and membership campaigns.

5. Ask the group to prepare for the next meeting by considering nominees for club president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. Also ask them to be prepared to begin planning programs and activities.

6. Schedule the next meeting for the following week. (Subsequent meetings may be scheduled monthly or semi-monthly, according to members' wishes, but at least the first two should take place soon to establish the organization quickly.) Ask the temporary secretary to prepare informal minutes of the first meeting for the group to review at the next meeting.

7. Request that one or two members help you continue to publicize the club through stories and photos in the school newspaper or district newsletter, as well as posters, flyers, etc. Also suggest that all members talk with other students about attending the next meeting.

Organizational Meeting

1. Call the meeting to order, welcome new members and ask them to introduce themselves. Ask the temporary secretary to distribute copies of and read the minutes of the first meeting.

2. Establish final election procedures and the responsibilities of each club officer elected.

3. Solicit nominations for president, vice president, secretary and treasurer.

4. Vote for officers, tally votes and announce candidates elected.

5. Plan the initiation ceremony of officers and charter members, such as a luncheon, dinner or after-school social. Arrange for a guest speaker, such as the county Teacher of the Year. Ask the club secretary to invite the principal, teachers and other appropriate guests, such as the local chief school administrator and board of education members.

6. Discuss planned club activities and conduct voice votes to select the first one or two club service projects or activities. Solicit volunteers to establish committees for organizing each activity.

7. After members adjourn, officers should meet to plan an agenda for the meetings following the initiation ceremony. Include on the agenda plans for specific club services and activities during the semester, as well as ideas for more long-range plans.

Charter Meeting

1. Conduct formal initiation ceremony and officially establish club.

2. Introduce guest speaker.

3. After the speaker's remarks, hold a question and answer period followed by an informal reception with refreshments, during which members and guests can mingle.

Subsequent Meeting Programs

Once a regular club meeting schedule is established, some meetings can feature guest speakers, followed by discussion of club business. A reception with refreshments would provide an opportunity for students to talk informally with the guests. Guest speakers might include:

* Teachers (a different one each meeting) in specialized areas of instruction (e.g. bilingual, art, vocational, elementary, business, etc.);

* A teacher who has taught or studied overseas, or in some other unusual environment;

* School staff (one each meeting) in various non-teaching positions (e.g. principal, school business administrator, librarian, media coordinator, etc.);

* A college professor who could speak about academic preparation to become a teacher;

* A teacher who has prepared for his or her career through New Jersey's Provisional Teacher Program (perhaps a teacher who entered the profession from another field);

* A speaker from the New Jersey State Department of Education or New Jersey State Department of Higher Education.

SAMPLE SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Teacher and School Oriented Services:

1. Organize a Teacher Shadow Day in which club members spend one day with a teacher of their choice to help those teachers and see firsthand what their work involves.

2. Arrange for each club member to "Adopt a Teacher" for a specified duration (e.g. one day per week for one semester) to help out while learning about lesson planning, instructional techniques and other aspects of teaching. The student might also plan and present a lesson to the class.

3. Conduct a Teacher Appreciation Day (or week), recruiting both club members and non-members to provide classroom assistance, hold luncheons or teas and present awards of appreciation for teachers.

4. Organize a "Teacher of the Day" program in which a single teacher is honored by the club. Arrange for the Teacher of the Day to be identified in daily school announcements and for club members to bring breakfast or lunch, clean up the classroom (erase blackboards, straighten desks, etc.) and generally help out for the teacher. Perhaps continue the program by honoring one teacher each week or month.

5. Arrange a Turn-About Day in which teachers and students swap roles.

6. Organize "Helping Hand Days" in which club members work with teachers to help prepare the classrooms at the beginning or end of the school year.

7. Have club members work with school guidance staff to research college and career information on teaching that can help other students.

8. Have club members volunteer to work as student assistants in the library or school office.

Student and Community Oriented Services:

1. Set up a tutoring program in the school by having club members provide peer tutoring.

2. Have club members serve on peer counseling groups.

3. Arrange for club members to serve as tutors or to provide after-school homework assistance for younger students in local elementary schools.

4. Arrange for club members to work with local elementary schools to help coach children's sports teams or help supervise other extracurricular activities.

5. Plan and conduct an orientation for new students about to enter the school. This could include spring orientation for all eighth-grade students who will enter the high school the following fall or for individual new students. Develop a handbook or welcome packet for these students.

6. Organize an "Adopt a Student" program in which both club members and non-members help new students adjust and become acquainted in the new school.

7. After obtaining the appropriate approval and making necessary arrangements, set up a day care center for pre-school children. Staff the center with volunteers from the club.

8. Help develop and distribute information about the teaching profession to students at career night.

9. Develop and distribute to all students a guide to student activities in the school, school district and community.

SAMPLE TRIPS, SOCIAL PROGRAMS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

1. Arrange a trip to the nearest teacher preparation college to observe a college-level education course. Hold a question and answer session with the instructor, a dean or other faculty member after the course.

2. Arrange a similar visit to a training center for the New Jersey Provisional Teacher Program.

3. Set up a tour of a New Jersey State Department of Education regional curriculum services unit (RCSU) and its educational technology training center. Arrange to attend one of the teacher training workshops hosted by the RCSUs each year.

4. Visit special schools such as vocational schools, special education facilities, etc.

5. Sponsor a tea or popcorn party for students and faculty to discuss their common concerns.

6. Take a club field trip to the New Jersey State Department of Education headquarters in Trenton and visit the department's Division of Teacher Preparation and Certification. Present the Commissioner of Education or a department representative with an honorary club membership.

7. Arrange for the club to observe a training session at the New Jersey State Department of Education's Academy for the Advancement of Teaching and Management.

8. Arrange for the club to attend an in-service training session for teachers.

9. Host a one-day conference, inviting other Future Teacher Clubs to exchange ideas and materials. Schedule the conference toward the end of the year, after other clubs have been organized and all clubs have conducted services and activities they can share.

10. Sponsor a school dance for all students; decorate the room with teaching related items (rulers, apples, books, etc.).

SAMPLE FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES

To help defray the cost of certain club operating expenses (meeting refreshments, banquets, yearbook space, awards, prizes, etc.), consider the following methods of raising money:

1. Sell tickets to special events:

   * A "Brain Bowl" between teams of teachers, students or both;
   * A club-sponsored talent show featuring faculty, students or both;
   * A club-sponsored softball or basketball game between faculty and students;
   * A faculty-student fashion show.

2. Sell the following items:

   * Club T-shirts, buttons, bookcovers, bumper stickers, etc. that help promote the teaching profession;
   * A cookbook including the best recipes from faculty and students;
   * School supplies, if possible on an on-going basis (e.g. open a school store -- if none already exists -- or set up a booth in the lunchroom one day per week);
   * Flowers or "love-grams" on Valentine's Day;
   * Apples (green apples on St. Patrick's Day);
   * Baked goods, candy, popcorn.

3. Collect unwanted books from students and faculty, and conduct a book exchange/sale.

4. Conduct car washes, if possible at the end of the school day on school grounds, where faculty and students can have cars washed as they leave.

5. Host a pancake breakfast or spaghetti dinner prepared by club members. Solicit food donations from merchants in the community.

6. Organize an outdoor flea market by selling booths to other student organizations, crafts makers and local merchants.

PUBLICIZING THE CLUB

By promoting its services and activities, the Future Teacher Club can establish a positive relationship with the school and community, and attract new members. Here are some suggestions for publicizing the club.

1. Meet with the school's guidance staff to inform them about the club. Ask them to encourage interested students to join, and find out what the club can do to help the guidance department inform students about the teaching profession. Provide them with club posters, handouts and information about club activities.

2. Clear all contacts with the media in advance through appropriate administrators in your school or school district. Then contact the local newspaper(s) and broadcast media when the club is organized and when it conducts newsworthy services or activities. Provide information in writing (preferably a news release with a contact name and phone number) to the city, community or education editor(s), and follow up with a phone call. Be specific about the time, date and location of an event, and point out any photographic possibilities. Be sure to make it clear that reporters and photographers are welcome, and ask that they inform the club secretary if they plan to attend. Initial contact with editors should be one week in advance, with phone follow-up the day before an event.

3. Ask school newspaper editors to publish feature articles and photos on the club, before and after it is organized, emphasizing planned club activities and services.

4. Arrange for a description of the club, including a meeting schedule, to be inserted in any school or district student handbooks or similar publications.

5. Establish a club bulletin board. Decorate it in an appropriate teaching theme and include a section for a club calendar and an update on the club's most recent activities and services. Post information useful to all students, such as dates of SAT test administrations or recruiting visits by post-secondary institutions.

6. Through your school principal, arrange for the club to provide a brief report on the Future Teacher Club to the local board of education at one of its public meetings. Inform local media in advance.

7. Ask the nearest teacher preparation college to run an article on the club in its newsletter or college newspaper.

8. Produce a video about teaching, showing club members working with teachers, teaching a class themselves, visiting a college, etc. Air the video on local access cable television or the school's closed circuit television.

9. Encourage local professional associations for educators, social and fraternal organizations, and businesses to contribute to scholarship funds for graduates who will attend college to become teachers.

INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY AND COLLEGES

Networking with the community and nearby colleges can create opportunities for innovative club services and activities. Club members can also get to know community leaders and college faculty and students who can help guide them in their preparation to become teachers. Here are some ways that the club can interact with these groups.

1. Identify and meet with a club liaison at the college, such as an education professor.

2. Coordinate a club activity with a college-level organization for students preparing to be teachers.

3. Arrange for club members to be guests at appropriate special conferences or seminars hosted by the local college or an on-campus organization for future teachers.

4. Arrange for club members to volunteer at a "demonstration school" affiliated with a college.

5. Have a club booth at the county fair or similar community event.

6. Offer to provide a presentation on the club or on the teaching profession to community organizations (Lions, Kiwanis, League of Women Voters, etc.).

CONCLUSION

The ideas and suggestions presented in this handbook were developed at the request of teachers and guidance counselors who indicated they would like materials to help them share the teaching experience with students.

However, the activities and programs described are merely samples of the kinds of experiences that teachers and students will undoubtedly create on their own.

Ultimately, the success of a Future Teacher Club, or other activities that allow students to experience teaching, will depend upon the imagination, energy and commitment of the educators and future educators who become involved in these programs through their schools.

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